Name that porn star

Arnold M. Zwicky, Stanford University (zwicky@csli.stanford.edu)

1. Lee West, Jon King, Jeff Quinn, Mark Jennings, Eric Carter, Rick Conrad, Tom Steele, Chris Tyler, Ryan Fox, Brian Kidd: some of the All-American boys whose sexual acts are celebrated in porn videos made for gay men. All-American boys with whitebread names, few of which are the ones these actors were born with (Joey Stefano, né Nicholas Iacona). Someone chose those names, and their choices are very far from a random sampling of male first names current in the United States, or of current American family names.

(Multiple names for the same actor: *Chet Roberts* ("preppy" persona), *Tag Adams* ("macho slut" persona). Note identical metrical pattern: FN: S + LN: S W. In general, FNs and LNs are very heavily either S or S W metrically.)

2. Source of data: cast lists in Adam Gay Video directories for 1993, 1997.

Removed: specifically Black, Hispanic, French, Thai, or Eastern European films. (Some of the actors nevertheless belong to these groups.)

Raw data: 2,622 tokens. Analysis of FNs only.

Removed: 27 initialisms (*J.D.*, *K.C.*, *J.T.*, *T.J.*, *J.R.*, *J.W*, *B.J.*, *P.C.*, etc.), 3 nicknames (*Papa Bear, Bat Boy, Angel Boy*). But note the metrical patterns.

Remaining: 456 types, counting homophones as a single type.

3. Distribution by # of tokens:

	3		
65	Mark/Marc	34	Joe
		33	Brian/Bryan/Bryon, Kevin
56	Steve	30	Jim, Nick/Nic/Nik
54	Mike, John/Jon		
51	Tony	29	Paul
	•	27	Brad
49	Sean/Shawn/Shaun	26	Peter
48	Chris/Kris	23	Matt
47	Eric/Erik/Erick/Erich	22	Bill, Jason/Jayson
46	Rick	20	Dan, Greg/Gregg
44	Jeff, Michael, Scott/Scot		
43	David		
42	Tom/Thom		

(At this point, the number of names with a given frequency shoots up.)

4. Unique FNs (202 of them, 44% of the sample):

Ordinary FN: Aiden, Alvin, Arik, Art, Arthur,... Walter, Ward, Wesley, Woody, Zeke (80) LN>FN: Boyer, Brant, Carlton, Cary, Dalton,... Travis, Trenton, Truman, Walker, York (39)

Inventive: Ace, Beto, Boo, Bosch, Bran,... Tannel, Tige, Toro, Yogi, Zeff (53)

French: Francois, Jacques, Jean, Michel (4)

Spanish: Armando, Eduardo, Juan, Paco, Ramon, Raul, Roberto, Tico (8)

Italian: Dom, Franco, Gian Carlo, Gianfranco, Guiseppe,... Romeo, Vito (13)

German(ic): Franz, Johannes, Klaus, Kristen, Rolf (5)

- 5. Phonological properties that Cutler et al. (1990) found to distinguish men's FNs from women's in English:
 - strength of initial syllable (male names have significantly more strong initial syllables); number of syllables (men have significantly more monosyllabic names and significantly fewer names of three or more syllables);
 - brightness of nuclear vowel (male names have significantly fewer instances of [i] as their stressed vowel and significantly more instances of certain back vowels, namely the lax mid and high back vowels).
 - (No consonant effects investigated, though for monosyllables there are almost surely some such effects.)
- (See also Slater & Feinman (1985), Lieberson & Mikelson (1995), de Klerk & Bosch (1997), Cassidy et al. (1999).)
- 6. Hypermasculinity of FNs of porn stars consistent with the hypermasculine presentation of self displayed by actors in gay porn (and see Levine (1998) on the gay macho persona).
- 7. Clustering of name types in the data:
- (a) pet FNs ending in [i] (*Tommy, Robbie, Richie, Billy*), perhaps to sugest a cute-boy persona not necessarily conveyed by the corresponding monosyllablic names (*Tom, Rob, Rich, Bill*);
- (b) "A-gay" FNs, full versions of commonly abbreviated names (*Robert* instead of *Bob* or *Rob*, *Bradley* instead of *Brad*, *Michael* instead of *Mike*), perhaps connoting seriousness;
- (c) use of FN only, especially an unusual FN (Austin, Gianfranco, Thor, Dixon, Robie, Storm);
- (d) use of two initials instead of a FN (*J.D.*, *K.C.*, *R.J.*, *J.T.*), a pattern found both in working-class and upper-middle-class naming;
 - (e) "preppy" FNs, i.e. LNs used as FNs (Keller, Blake, Dalton, Hodge, Tyler);
- (f) Italian names (FNs Giorgio, Armando, Eduardo; LNs Demarco, Stefano, Mancini, Ferrara) (Italian is the only recognizable non-whitebread ethnicity that occurs with any frequency in my data; recognizably Polish, German, or Jewish names are few in number; Arnold doesn't appear at all, either as FN or LN);
- (g) inventive spellings, perhaps to counteract the unexceptional character of these names otherwise (LNs *Wallice, Foxx, Ozmond, Rydar*);
- (h) playful rip-offs of familiar non-porn names (*Mike Nichols, Jimmy Dean, Clark Kent, Thom Cruz, Tom Sawyer*);
- (i) cowboy, country, and Western names (FN *Tex*; LNs *Ryder*, *Chisholm*, *Denver*, *Texas*, *Steers*, *Utah*; and two that go both ways, *Lash* and *Colt Colt Morgan*, *Colt Jackson*; *Shane Colt*, *Adam Colt*, *Marc/Mark Colt*, *Boyer Colt*);
- (j) tough, aggressive, insertive names (FN Butch; LNs Brawn/Braun, Lightning, Spears, Stryker, Mallett, Panther, Saber; versatile Wolf/Wolfe/Wolff, Hunter Hunter Scott and 22 guys with LN Hunter, from Adam to Zack and Cougar, both Cougar Cash and Nick Cougar);
- (k) LNs of especially popular porn stars that are then assumed by others (various *Strykers*, following *Jeff*, and various *Stefanos*, following *Joey*); and, of course,
- (l) more or less explicitly sexual names (FN Randy, LNs Cox, Fox/Foxe/Foxx, Hardon/Harden, Cruise/Cruze/Kruze, Score), though these are rarer than might have been expected.
- 8. Many of these clusters express values associated with the hypermasculine presentation of self the rough, working-class, aggressive leatherman (either in the great outdoors or on the tough city streets) but at least two other gay male stereotypes are represented in these clusters: the twink, the cute and sexy young thing; and the A-gay, the man of good family (or at least with the name of a good family) with a buffed body and money to spend on good times.

References

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